

**NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE
PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS**

ANNUAL REPORT

1958

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A message to those men and women who, by their devoted interest, work and support, have formed the cornerstones upon which this organization continues to grow in serving the cause of sight conservation.

THE YEAR 1958 marked the beginning of our second half century. It was a time during which attention was focused on personalities and events associated with the National Society's early years when the term "prevention of blindness" was only vaguely understood, and scarcely recognized as a movement destined to become nationwide in scope and importance.

We took the occasion of our 50th anniversary to remind people that whereas a single eye disease, "babies' sore eyes," was the sole target for the first prevention of blindness committee in 1908, today's program is concerned with virtually every known cause of loss of sight.

The pages of this report show that these causes are many and diverse: a flying steel particle becomes embedded in the eye of an industrial worker; a child's vision is permanently damaged because no one suspected in time the presence of a serious eye problem; a business executive loses sight due to glaucoma without even knowing he had this disease; a brilliant teenage student is blinded by the explosion of his home-made space rocket. Sympathy will not restore these lost eyes. But *prevention of blindness in action* can be a vital factor in helping to avoid them entirely, or in minimizing the results of such neglect and carelessness.

To this end we have tried to put forth our best and most dedicated efforts in 1958. In some areas of our work we have succeeded more notably than in others. Because of these we recognize the challenging new possibilities for saving sight which have yet to be explored and brought to a high level of accomplishment.

Ira V. Hiscock

Mason H. Bigelow

REVIEW OF THE YEAR



Above: 15,000th member of the Wise Owl Club. Ceremony on September 22 shows left to right: Mason H. Bigelow, National Society board chairman, Gov. Averell Harriman of New York, who made the presentation to John E. O'Banks, employee of Central Hudson Gas & Electric Co., Poughkeepsie, N. Y., and Ernest R. Acker, president of the utility company.

GLAUCOMA . . . For thousands of persons during the past year the question of whether they had glaucoma became a matter of primary concern. Several mass circulation magazines published articles about this blinding eye disease and undoubtedly brought to many their first realization of its power to permanently damage or destroy their sight.

But your National Society estimates there still are more than half a million men and women who have glaucoma and don't know it. However, the number of those who obviously recognized the need for early diagnosis and treatment was growing. Community wide glaucoma screening projects sponsored by your National Society in Pennsylvania, California (including 7,000 visitors to the San Diego County Fair), Connecticut and New York, proved unusually successful. And though research continually seeks answers to the cause and management of glaucoma (two such projects at New York's Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital and Boston's Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, received financial support from your National Society in 1958), there is a greater possibility of reducing the toll of blindness from this disease through wide-spread public education and enlightenment.

During the past year basic preventive measures publicized in newspapers, pamphlets, special features, films, radio and television, were: glaucoma danger signals—the advisability of including a test for glaucoma in every regular physical checkup—the importance of a thorough eye examination at least every two years for persons past 40.

The Society's overall glaucoma program included several key meetings of professional groups in which staff members took part. In October, 65 ophthalmologists from this country and abroad participated in the annual symposium in Chicago sponsored by your National Society for physicians interested in glaucoma.

The Columbia University School of Public Health and the New York State Department of Health conducted three institutes on glaucoma for public health physicians, nurses, and social workers. National Society staff members aided in planning these institutes and participated in them. A glaucoma symposium at the Newark Eye and Ear Infirmary was held in cooperation with the New Jersey Academy of Medicine. The Society's national committee on glaucoma met to review and advise on educational aspects of the program and glaucoma detection projects.

The CBS radio network program, "City Hospital," produced a half hour episode using glaucoma as the theme for its dramatic presentation. This was developed as the result of a suggestion made by our public information department.

Progress against glaucoma is, at this time, a matter of steady, painstaking scientific investigation. It is also concerned with the increasing use of a carefully planned educational campaign designed to persuade a large section of the public on the value of early detection and treatment. Consultation and discussion among professional leaders served the additional purpose of combining experience and knowledge for greater effectiveness of the entire program.

At the conclusion of this twelve month period we find that glaucoma, while not by any means a household word, is commanding the attention of greater numbers of thoughtful people who regard it as a foe to be reckoned with—and, at all costs, ultimately defeated.

HELEN KELLER DAY . . . Sight Saving Month, major educational event of the year, opened September 2 with a tribute to one of America's most distinguished women. In a letter to National Society volunteers throughout the country, Miss Keller said, "The development of your organization has always been marked by outstanding men and

cont'd.



Above: New York City's Mayor Robert F. Wagner (right), presents Sight Saving Month proclamation to Lester Brion, National Society board member and Franklin M. Foote, M.D., Executive Director.



Above: "Eyes for the Future"—a new TV series on information and care of the eyes was produced on KRMA, Denver, in cooperation with The National Society's Colorado Chapter. Left to right: Dr. Edward Swets, Dr. Ivan Hix, Jr. and Len Bermon, narrator.

Below: Dr. J. Grant Irving, left, medical director for Aetna Life Affiliated Companies, accepts special certificate of appreciation from National Society president, Ira V. Hiscock, Sc.D. The insurance firm generously produced the film "Betty Sees A Bird," widely used in training volunteers in preschool vision screening techniques.



Review of the year . . . cont'd.

women who saw in blindness prevention a major field in which to serve the welfare of their fellow human beings." *THE 15,000TH WISE OWL* . . . Governor Averell Harri- man presented this special honor on September 22nd to John E. O'Banks, employee of the Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. of Poughkeepsie, N. Y. Mr. O'Banks was wearing approved type safety glasses when he fell 30 feet from a utility pole into rough weed stubble. Though severely injured, his sight was saved. **FEDERAL SERVICE CAMPAIGN** . . . For the second consecutive year your National Society was among ten leading health agencies participating in the fund raising campaign which solicits contributions among members of the armed services and civilian personnel in the United States and abroad. Through this means, the National Society and its state and local affiliates received more than \$116,000 in 1958.

NEW COMMITTEES . . . organized to carry out prevention of blindness programs in West Virginia and Louisiana . . . *VISION INSTITUTE, DES MOINES* . . . Two hun- dred public health nurses and teachers from all parts of the state attended the two-day program in October, which was planned by National Society staff members at the invitation of the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction. *OUR NEW PRESIDENT* . . . On May 22 Ira V. Hiscock, Sc.D., became president of the National Society suc- ceeding Mason H. Bigelow, who was elected to the newly created office of chairman of the board. Dr. Hiscock is chairman of the Yale University department of public health and has been a member of the Yale faculty since 1920. *WATER FLUOURIDATION AND EYE DISEASE* . . . A special committee investigating the possible relationship between fluouridation of water supplies and certain eye diseases reported they found no evidence to support this theory.

RESEARCH



The causes of much blinding eye disease remains obscure. To help solve these vital problems your National Society provides financial aid to important research projects investigating many threats to sight of young and old.

Funds made available for this purpose during recent years amount to approximately \$190,000.

Outstanding research achievements supported by National Society grants include the successful attack on RLF—retrolental fibroplasia—which cost the sight of more than 8,000 premature infants before its cause, the overuse of oxygen, was discovered in 1954.



1958 EYE RESEARCH GRANTS

INSTITUTION	TITLE OF STUDY	INSTITUTION	TITLE OF STUDY
University of Texas, Galveston	Chemical Solutions Used in Eye Surgery	Medical College of Virginia Richmond	Corneal Transplant
Boston City Hospital	Testing Visual Acuity in Infants	Emory University Medical School Atlanta, Georgia	Eye Tumors in Children
Washington University, St. Louis	Retinal Conditions	University of Chicago	Radioactive Drugs Used in the Eye
University of Nebraska, Omaha	Blindness from Diabetes	Cook County Hospital, Chicago	Treatment of Eye Inflammations
Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons, New York	Tumors and Implants in the Orbit	Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital, New York	Glaucoma
Wills Eye Hospital, Philadelphia	Circulation of the Retina	Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary Boston	Ways to Improve Management of Glaucoma
New York University—Bellevue Medical Center	Preservation of the Cornea		



Above: The Snellen "E" chart is used as basis for preschool vision screening. Children first learn to point in direction of larger letter before real test begins.

Below: Volunteer assists preschool youngster reading the "E" chart from distance of 20 feet. Results of National Society screening projects sometimes show as many as 7 percent of those tested in need of some kind of eye care.



FIELD SERVICE

PRESCHOOL VISION SCREENING . . . Pretty, blue-eyed Linda, age 5, is a pupil at the Lucille Tisor Kindergarten in Phoenix, Arizona. In the bright, sunny classrooms there is always lots to do—games to play, things to learn, pictures to draw and stories to listen to.

On a Friday morning recently they expected to do all these things just as usual. But instead there were three ladies the children hadn't seen before busily setting the chairs in long rows and putting up a strange looking chart on the wall. Linda was puzzled to notice the chart had many letters which looked like "E's" pointing in different directions and becoming smaller in size from top to bottom.

When the children were together one of the ladies said they were going to learn a new game. Holding up a large letter "E" she pretended this was a three-legged table. Linda watched as the "legs" of the table were turned up, down or sideways and soon caught on to the idea of pointing her arms in the same direction. You could tell by the expressions on their faces that everyone thought this was great fun.

Then came another part of the "game." One by one each child was asked to stand in a specially marked space twenty feet from that strange looking chart on the wall. Only this time it wasn't as easy for some of them to tell which way the "E" pointed.

The three ladies, members of the Kachina Women's Club in Phoenix, worked as a team. One indicated which letter on the chart was to be read while another covered first the child's right eye, then the left. The third lady kept a careful record of how well each child had done according to the standards which had been agreed upon in advance by

a professional advisory committee. A child who could not read the smallest size letter required would be referred for a thorough eye examination.

This is preschool vision screening in action. During the past year your National Society sponsored this same kind of program in 24 states (there was an increase of 20 individual projects this year). And in 1958 there were 35,000 boys and girls who, like Linda, tried to tell which way the letters pointed on the Snellen "E" chart.

Behind success of these programs lie months of planning and organization by professional staff members. Volunteers must be enlisted and trained (2,500 were taught vision screening procedures in 1958); and obtaining cooperation of physicians, teachers, public health officials and others is of vital importance. For most young children, as our experience has proved, it is the only chance they may have for early detection of an eye problem before serious or perhaps permanent damage occurs. Additional support for studies in both vision testing and glaucoma detection projects is provided through a grant from Knight's Templer Eye Research Foundation.

THE PARTIALLY SEEING CHILD . . . A wide range of special materials and services are needed to provide children with low visual acuity the educational advantages essential to their normal learning progress and personality development. The continuing program to fulfill this need took our educational consultant to 67 cities and 35 states in 1958. During the summer an advanced workshop for experienced teachers of partially seeing children was conducted at Syracuse University by your National Society's staff.



Above: "It's Wise—Save Eyes Early" says the red and white button being pinned on youngster after preschool vision test.

Below: Delta Gamma Alumnae volunteers are among those who devote time and energy to National Society preschool vision screening projects throughout the country.



PUBLIC INFORMATION

The prevention of blindness program must have two important aids in building its scope and effectiveness—and also to attract the best possible financial support for its many projects and services: (1) we must tell our story in terms people can readily understand, and (2) we must tell it often and in such a way that they are persuaded to act upon the suggestions or appeals contained in the message

In 1958 this premise led to adoption of a new “slogan” which underscored a fact frequently mentioned in our publications: *half of all blindness is needless and preventable*. A distinctive black and red design helped make this one of the most talked about publicity themes in the health field.

Introduced during Sight Saving Month in September this was used on posters, public service transit car cards, restaurant table tents, menu clipons for railroad dining cars, inserts for payroll envelopes and bank statements, automobile bumper strips, billboards, and TV slides.



Among industrial safety directors particularly the new posters attracted a great deal of attention. A total of 13,500 posters were ordered by 250 plants with more than 557,000 employees, 33 U.S. Government installations, including the air force, army, navy, marine, forest service, and Bureau of Mines.

In Houston and Indianapolis the Boy Scouts cooperated by distributing 10,000 posters to stores, offices, banks, and public centers such as airports and railroad stations.

Outdoor advertising companies in Philadelphia and South Bend, Indiana, contributed full size billboard space in ten prominent locations in each city. These were exact color reproductions of the *half of all blindness* theme and design.

Also newly introduced in 1958 was a red and white “Owl” button specially developed as a publicity aid for the preschool vision screening program. Beginning in the early fall this emblem, which reads, “It’s Wise—Save Eyes Early” has been given to more than 50,000 youngsters.



RADIO AND TELEVISION . . . With John Daly, vice president of the American Broadcasting Company and famed moderator of “What’s My Line,” serving as chairman, our coverage of these media was complete. Spot announcements for radio, and a new 20-second sound-on-film television spot on general eye care, were sent to these outlets in every part of the country. Actual use of these materials on the air is hard to determine with any degree of accuracy since only about 10% of stations returned the public service report form indicating the number of spots used and their commercial value. The following data therefore gives only a minimum indication of use: number of spot announcements 23,500; estimated commercial value \$195,000.00.

Talking directly to people in these ways, seeking to inform them reliably about eye care, eye health and eye safety, knowing sometimes that the message has struck home—*this is public information in action*.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS NEWS

Published for All Who Work to Save Sight — by The National Society for the Prevention of Blindness December 1958

Governor Harriman Inducts 15,000th Wise Owl Club Member



Eye Problems of Children Discussed

The National Society for the Prevention of Blindness and the Minnesota Commission on the Blind...



Reporting POB activities throughout the country



Governors of 38 states proclaimed September
as Sight Saving Month in 1958.

The New Vision Screening Button

all eyes
are on
SUSIE



HALF

— of all Blindness is
Needless and Preventable!



The Greatest Gift...



Some glass eyes can be made to look like the real thing. This worker prefers the ones he already has. By wearing safety glasses on the job he saved the sight of his right eye.



The eyes have it—in this case SIGHT. Special eye protection prevented blindness or serious eye injury.



Safety glasses pay off for this industrial worker whose right eye might otherwise have been blinded by flying metal particle.

INDUSTRIAL PROGRAM

The advantages realized by millions of people as a result of our highly industrialized age are apparent in so many ways it is scarcely necessary any more to point out the fact that they exist. On the other hand we sometimes are forced to measure these achievements against the overall cost involved in making them possible. Often this is obviously worthwhile. But when we add up the number of *eye accidents* to American workers each year—accidents frequently causing permanent eye damage or blindness—there is no doubt the price is far too high.

It is a price we need not pay. Ten years ago, your National Society sponsored an entirely new eye safety incentive program for industry. Growing out of a suggestion made by an employee of the American Car & Foundry Co. (now ACF Industries), workers who saved their sight at the time of an on the job accident through wearing safety glasses became members of what has since grown to be the leading organization of its kind in the world—the Wise Owl Club of America.

In 1958, 2,282 industrial workers earned that distinction. Total Club Membership: 15,993.

With adequate eye protection available, why are there an estimated 300,000 eye accidents every year in manufacturing and industrial plants across the country? The answer is that total eye safety programs still have not been widely enough adopted. Management, labor, even workers themselves must be convinced of the value of these preventive measures. When this kind of mutual cooperation is brought to bear on the problem, the results can be nothing short of inspiring. One prominent manufacturer reports their employees have worked 140 million man hours without a single lost eye. Another has achieved a record of 14 years with no eyes lost due to an on-the-job injury.

This is industrial eye safety in action!

WISE OWL CLUB MEMBERS

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1958



TOTAL CLUB MEMBERSHIP: 15,993

**THE
GIFT OF SIGHT
CAN BE YOUR GIFT
TO OTHERS
IN THE FUTURE**

An important part of the National Society's work is made possible by legacies from men and women who thoughtfully chose this way of providing for the welfare of those who live after them.

To assure continuing financial support for this vital sight saving program a brief statement expressing your wishes may be included in your will:

"I give and bequeath to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of.....for its corporate purposes."

The Memorial Gift Plan offers an appropriate opportunity for making a "gift that serves" to mark a friend's birthday, recovery from illness or other special event. Gifts may also be made in this way on behalf of a deceased friend or relative in which case a memorial sympathy card is sent by the Society to the family or friends of the deceased.

Names of persons thus honored are inscribed in the Society's Book of Remembrance as a permanent record.

For details of the Memorial Gift Plan, or other information, write the National Society, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

Benefactor	\$1,000 and over	Contributing	\$10.00 and over
Patron	\$100.00 " "	Subscribing	\$ 5.00 " "
Sustaining	\$50.00 " "	Associate	\$ 2.00 " "

ACCOUNTANTS' REPORT

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.

We have examined the Statement of Income Expenditures and Resources of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc. for the year ended December 31, 1958. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and accordingly included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. As to contributions and memberships, it was not practicable because of their nature to extend the examination beyond accounting, on a test basis, for the receipts as recorded.

The income, expenditures and resources of the state chapters of the National Society are not included in the accompanying statement nor were the financial statements of such chapters examined by us.

In our opinion the accompanying Statement of Income Expenditures and Resources summarizes fairly the financial transactions of the Society, excluding state chapters, for the year ended December 31, 1958, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

PEAT, MARWICK, MITCHELL & CO.

New York, New York
February 20, 1959

STATEMENT OF INCOME, EXPENDITURES AND RESOURCES — YEAR 1958

Total Resources at January 1, 1958

\$785,959.16

Expenditures

Research	\$ 52,388.87
Professional Education	95,399.97
Public Education in Eye Health	168,457.50
Program Support	81,121.12
Program Development and Consultation	88,370.35
Industrial Program	33,872.69
Glaucoma Program	15,746.70
Cooperative Projects with Other Agencies	2,592.00
International Activities	1,169.32
Administration	29,471.01
Pensions	4,138.32
Total Expenditures	572,727.85
	\$213,231.31

Income

Contributions and Memberships	\$415,711.61
Publications, Wise Owl Club Memberships, Honoraria, etc.	35,770.40
Income—Endowment and Reserve Funds	35,912.02
Income from Trust Funds	14,619.08
	<u>\$502,013.11</u>
Legacies	86,654.83
Total Income	588,667.94

Total Resources at December 31, 1958

\$801,899.25

YOUR EYES

To preserve one's sight from injury and disease is not only fundamental good sense; it is a way of acknowledging a divine endowment.

But the gift of sight rewards us through life only if we admit its susceptibility to forces fully capable of destroying or damaging it beyond recall.

An eye injury, or an eye disease could permanently threaten your sight or cause blindness. Work safe, play safe at all times. If your job is hazardous in any way protect your eyes with safety glasses. Have a thorough eye examination at least every two years—especially after 40.

There is no substitute for *prevention*—because there is no substitute for *your eyes*.